

THE

# COMMON SCHOOL JOURNAL.

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THE following law has been passed since the publication of our seventh number. We now publish it, in pursuance of our original design of making this Journal the depository of all the laws of the State, in relation to Schools.

## AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

*Be it enacted, by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—*Whenever a town shall determine that teachers shall be selected and contracted with by the prudential committees of the several districts, according to the provisions of the one hundred and fifth chapter of the laws of the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, such a town or district may elect three persons as a prudential committee, who shall perform all the duties provided for in the twenty-fifth section of the twenty-third chapter of the Revised Statutes.

Approved, April 9, 1839.

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## SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

In our last number, we endeavored to show how school-committee men should be appreciated. We took a view of the relative rank and the intrinsic importance and dignity of the station they fill, compared with that of other officers. We vindicated its superiority to other social positions, which, though more desired, must, in the eyes of all rational men, be held far less desirable.

The true elevation of this office arises from the magnitude and the variety of the interests dependent upon it. Every interest necessarily involves a duty. Hence the duties of school-committee men, in regard to our Common Schools, are commensurate with the great and varied interests, intrusted to their keeping.

It comes within the limits of our plan, to offer, from time to time, some hints and suggestions in regard to the nature of these duties, and the manner and the spirit in which they should be discharged. An adequate exposition of them, in their multiplied relations and details, would fill, not numbers merely, but volumes. We can now touch upon one or two points only, of this comprehensive subject.

The first duty of a school-committee man, is to make himself familiar with the laws of the State, in regard to Public Instruction. These are his guides, his rules of action. Owing to the general neglect into which Common School education has fallen, it is not uncommon to meet with men possessing great intelligence on other subjects, who are sadly deficient in an acquaintance with this. The highway law, and the militia law, are far better understood than the school law. Men are to be found, who will discuss questions of bank policy, and quote Jackson and Webster, Biddle and Benton, who know nothing of our system of Public Instruction, and are ready, from sheer ignorance, to take up any of those prejudices against it, which ill-designing persons delight to scatter. Some palliation for this may be found in the fact, that the laws in relation to schools have not been con-

veniently accessible to the citizens. Happily, this obstacle to a general acquaintance with them, is now wholly removed. On the 29th of March, last, Mr. CUSHMAN, of Bernardston, offered an order in the House of Representatives, of which the following is a copy.

“*Ordered*, That the Secretary of the Commonwealth be requested to furnish, as soon as may be convenient, each town, each school committee, and each school district, with a copy of the laws now in force relating to schools.”

This order was adopted without opposition. As we were then publishing the laws of the Commonwealth in this Journal, the Secretary of State made an arrangement with our Publishers for the requisite number of copies to supply the towns, the committees, and the districts, according to the order. These have been transmitted; and, except it may be in some case of accident or mistake, a complete copy of the school laws is now in the possession of every town, of every town's committee, and of every prudential committee, in the State.

From an examination of these laws, the school committees will perceive, that they stand in a twofold relation to the cause of Public Education. *First*, there is a class of duties, appertaining to the several school committees, in regard to their own city or town, where they have the general superintendence and management of the schools, and are immediately responsible to their own townsmen for fidelity in their office; and, *secondly*, the school committee of each town sustain certain fixed relations to the general cause of Public Instruction throughout the Commonwealth, and, in this way, each Board of committee men is connected with all other Boards in the State, and is bound so to conduct its affairs as to aid in the furtherance of general objects, and the production of general results. In the first relation, the committee administer the law for the city or town which elects them. Here their business is local; it is limited to a small circle, but within that circle, their jurisdiction is exclusive. In the second relation, they are parts of a system, where different agencies are working to a common end;—and where, therefore, there must be a uniformity of action, a correspondence of views, a harmony of movement, and a unanimous observance of general rules. In the first case, the towns are independent of each other. Within the provisions of the law, they may change, modify or reverse their plans and modes, at pleasure. The committee is accountable to the town, but the town is accountable to no one. But in the second case, the general law is to be obeyed, the general requisition is to be complied with, until it is altered by the competent authority, notwithstanding any town may be ever so well satisfied, that it could have devised a cheaper, or a better mode of proceeding. Otherwise the different parts of the machinery will conflict with each other, and defeat the ends for which it was established. For instance, notwithstanding the great mischiefs, arising from the diversity of school books, yet each committee is authorized to prescribe the books for the schools in its own town, uncontrolled by the views which prevail in adjacent towns. And though the consequence of this is, that correct spelling and reading and grammar are one thing on the south side of a highway and another thing on the north, yet none have the right of interference or questioning. But in regard to the Annual Returns to be made to the Secretary of State, and the kind and the classification of the statistical facts they are to contain, the case is different. Here the standing rule is to be observed by all, until it is altered for all, by the paramount authority.

We have been more particular in pointing out this twofold relation of the school committees, because there are many individuals, who appear to think, that if they perform their local duties to the town, it is of little consequence though they neglect their general duties to the State. Perhaps it would not be difficult to prove that the latter are as important as the former.

The next duty of the town's committee is to “select and contract with the teachers for the town and district schools,” (see Stat. 1838, ch. 105,

sect. 2,—p. 109, of this volume of the Journal,) except the town shall determine that the teachers shall be "selected and contracted with by the prudential committees." It will be seen, by this provision, that the duty of selecting and contracting with teachers is to be performed by the town's committee, as a matter of course, except the town, by a positive act, shall transfer it from that committee to the prudential.

By whomsoever this act of selecting and contracting with teachers is performed,—whether by the town's committee, as primarily provided by law, or by the prudential committee, by virtue of a special vote of the town,—it surely is one of the most important in the whole range of duties. There is a special propriety in referring to this subject, now, because this is the season when a great majority of the Female teachers for the summer schools is selected. The teacher is the fashioner of the young minds in her school, at their forming period. She is a model for their manners, a trainer of their intellects, a former of their habits; and, in some respects, an absolute creator of their tastes, their sympathies, and their aversions. At a period, when the open and inquiring natures of the children are receptive of evil as well as of good, she is the being from whom those influences are to emanate, which will surround them like an atmosphere, be inhaled by them at every breath, imbibed, absorbed, through every sense and at every pore. The fountains of youthful feelings are open in every heart,—copiously they flow and overflow—but the channels of the streams are not yet cut and worn deep, by time and habit, and, therefore, the currents can now be changed and made to flow, where they will shed bloom and fertility through all their course; or they may be collected into a noisome pool, to breed venom and to reek with pestilence. Does not the selection of a teacher, then, rank among the first,—if it be not the very first,—of all the duties incumbent upon committees? Every thing else may be well,—the laws may be conceived in the highest wisdom, the appropriations by the town may be munificent, the gradation of the schools may be complete, the houses may be healthful and commodious,—every preliminary step may be perfect beyond improvement,—and yet all may be ruined, in this last stage of the proceeding, through the negligence or the selfishness of the committee in the selection of the teacher. When the law of 1838, transferring the power of contracting with teachers from the prudential to the town's committee, was passed, the prevailing argument, urged in its favor, was, that the prudential committees often acted from a narrow spirit, that they engaged teachers, not from worthy and patriotic considerations, but from selfish and sinister motives. It was alleged, that prudential committees employed their own daughters, or sisters, or nieces, or cousins, or, that, in their quest after teachers, *they kept within the family or the clan*;—or, if they went out of the family precincts, that they would select some unsightly beldam or musty crone, with odious and repulsive manners, not because she had any power to teach, but because she needed the pay,—as though the physical subsistence of one such adult was of higher consequence than the moral aliment of fifty children,—as though it were worth while, in order to feed one person, bodily, to starve scores of children spiritually. To what extent this allegation was well-founded, it is unnecessary now to inquire. Since the public attention has been turned to this subject, we believe a practice would be universally reprobated and denounced, as the most pernicious and absurd of all charities, which would "*pauperize*" all the children of a district, mentally, even could such a sacrifice save one individual from almshouse pauperism. Let other teachers be provided for the children, and other charities be bestowed upon the poor.

Whether the teachers are selected by the prudential or by the town's committee, they are to be "*examined*" by the latter. The respective duties and obligations of the prudential committee, of the town's committee, and of the teachers themselves, in regard to this point, are clearly laid down in



the *thirteenth* and *fourteenth* sections of the twenty-third chapter of the Revised Statutes. (See p. 99, of this volume of the Journal.) They are as follows.

"SECT. 13. The school committee shall require full and satisfactory evidence of the good moral character of all instructors, who may be employed in the public schools in their towns, and shall ascertain, by personal examination, their literary qualifications and capacity for the government of schools.

"SECT. 14. Every instructor of a town or district school shall obtain, of the school committee of such town, a certificate in duplicate, of his qualifications, BEFORE he opens such school, one of which shall be filed with the town treasurer, *before* any payment is made to such instructor on account of his services."

The course, pursued by some prudential committees, of engaging a teacher and introducing him into the school, without the *previous* examination and approval of the town's committee, is in the highest degree reprehensible. They commence their duties under the law by a violation of one of its most important provisions. They usurp a power, expressly conferred by the law upon another. Suppose some seditious-minded person in the district, should attempt, in defiance of the prudential committee, to introduce some favorite of his own into the school, would not the prudential-committee man have reason to complain of such an infringement of his official rights? It is not less an infringement of the rights of the town's committee, when the prudential committee inducts any person into the school, without their previous approval. If one prudential-committee man may do this, why not all, in the Commonwealth? Thus the whole system would be subverted. Let those, who would encroach in this manner upon the rightful authority of the town's committee, reflect, for a moment, on their own position and feelings, should the town's committee be guilty of a like encroachment upon their province, and thus learn the applicability of the rule of doing to others, as they would be done unto!

The offence of the teacher, who colludes with the prudential committee and gets possession of the school, without previously submitting himself to an examination by the town's committee, is not less worthy of condemnation. Before obtaining a certificate of approval, a teacher has no more right to show his face in a public school, than a clergyman has, without invitation, to thrust himself into another's pulpit; or a lawyer to rush into court and attempt the management of a case, in which he has never been retained; or a physician to obtrude his uncalled, and unwelcome visage into a sick bed-chamber. There is not a little incongruity, in a person's getting possession of a place, by stealth and fraud, where it is to be a part of his business to teach honesty and fair-dealing. A teacher who strives to evade the regular examination,—which is a preliminary to opening his school—proclaims to the world, that, even in his own opinion, he is incapable of sustaining it. He admits himself deficient, even in the literary qualifications, meagre as they are, which the law requires. He consents, therefore, to *sneak into* a school, which he cannot lawfully and boldly enter. Like a piece of contraband goods, as he cannot be duly admitted, he must be smuggled in. Such a contraband article has one advantage;—its worthlessness for any public use, secures it against confiscation.

We must defer to another opportunity a consideration of the duty of the town's committee in regard to the examination of the candidates for keeping the schools. We add a remark upon a single topic only. In addition to a knowledge of the rudiments, and to the good moral character of the candidates, the law makes it the especial duty of the committee to "*ascertain, by personal examination, their literary qualifications and capacity for the GOVERNMENT OF SCHOOLS.*" Here it may be inquired, how committees can ascertain, "*by personal examination,*" the capacity of a candidate "*FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF SCHOOLS.*" It is to be done, and it can be done, only by questioning them as to their views in respect to the proper modes and means of governing children,—in what manner obedience is to be secured;—whether

fear or affection, whether emulation, which nourishes pride and envy, or a sense of duty and the approval of conscience, is to take precedence in the list of motives to be appealed to. It enters essentially into the art of governing a school, to understand in what manner children can be pleasantly and usefully occupied; how frequently alternations should occur between the exercise of the body and that of the mind, between the exertions of the intellect and the pleasurable excitement of the feelings. Again, it enters essentially into the art of governing a school, to determine with correctness, whether a code of rules should be laid down beforehand, and specific penalties attached to their violation, or whether the children should be allowed, as far as possible, in the first instance to act out their dispositions, so that the teacher may discover what is right and cultivate it, what is wrong and extirpate it, what exists in too great or in too small a degree, and repress the one and foster the growth of the other. Especially, let the teachers be questioned as to what works they have read on the subject of education, what views of their authors they approve, and what they would modify or discard. How is it possible, that a person who has not both read and thought much upon the subject of education, can bring to this most difficult of all earthly tasks that variety of expedients for which there will be such ever-recurring occasions in a school, and that enlightened judgment, which is to preside over the discharge of all its manifold duties!

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#### PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN SALEM.

We are glad to see, by the late Inaugural Address of the Mayor of Salem,—the Hon. Stephen C. Phillips, late member of Congress,—that the condition of the Public Schools in that city is regarded by him, as one of its most substantial and enduring interests. We extract a few passages from the Address. Such an exposition, respecting the smallness of the appropriation and the extent to which its benefits are impaired by division between public and private schools, cannot be lost upon that wealthy and intelligent city.

“In the public schools of the city, nineteen in number, there are now educated 1565 children. There are 64 private schools, which receive 1469 scholars. The cost of tuition, in the public schools, amounts to \$8880, averaging \$5.67 per scholar, while the corresponding expense in the private schools, is \$19,690, averaging \$13.47 per scholar. For several years past, there has been a gradual increase in the number of scholars in the public schools, and a corresponding diminution in the private schools. The number of public schools has not been increased since 1827, while the number of scholars is much larger than it was in that year. Most of the school-houses are now filled to overflowing, scarcely one of the English schools being provided with seats enough to accommodate the scholars in attendance. With the exception of the assistants recently furnished to the Female Schools, no additional teachers have been appointed, and, notwithstanding the increase of duties, the salaries remain the same.

“These are facts upon which much profitable reflection may be bestowed. They show, 1st, the magnitude of the system of Public Instruction—2d, its economy—3d, its increasing popularity—4th, the necessity of making further provision for its enlargement—5th, the claims of teachers to assistance in some form, and to additional compensation. In confirmation of this latter conclusion, I may state, that, at the last meeting of the late School Committee, with the view of placing upon record an opinion which should be regarded as the result of their experience, it was voted, unanimously, that the salaries ought to be increased, and, by a large majority, that assistants ought to be employed.

“In determining the appropriations for the schools, while we principally regard the precedents which our predecessors have established, it may not be unwise to consult other examples of a discharge of the same trust, so far, at least, that we may understand the position we occupy in comparison

with our sister cities, and the larger towns in the Commonwealth. The annual school returns, in the form in which they are now prepared by the Board of Education, exhibit, with unquestionable accuracy, what has actually been done by every municipal corporation, in support both of public and private schools, alike with reference to its wealth, as shown by the State valuation, and its population, as shown by the census. It is the leading object of these returns to furnish the data for such a comparative estimate as I shall now present, as the means of exciting and directing a laudable competition to secure everywhere a full share of the advantages which experience has anywhere shown to be attainable. It is extremely interesting to investigate the results disclosed by these returns. While they exhibit the highest merits of the system of Public Instruction, as strikingly displayed wherever it has been faithfully and liberally sustained, they expose many defects, which none can fail to attribute to errors of administration, or, in most instances, to an improvident neglect or refusal to supply the necessary resources. Let us, then, be willing to understand what is the true rank of Salem, as awarded by the irreversible decision of the last returns, and let us determine whether or not we are content to retain it.

"The somewhat startling fact meets what would probably be our first inquiry, that, in proportion to valuation, the amount paid for the support of public schools in Salem, (in the year to which the returns refer, 1837-8,) was less than in any town in the Commonwealth, only excepting Nantucket, which, by a recent vigorous effort, has started forward so far at once, as almost to have attained a reversed position. The amount paid by Salem was \$10,309, which, calculated upon \$8,515,991 75, the amount of the valuation, is at the rate of a fraction more than 12 cents for 100 dollars. Extending the estimate to the larger towns in this county, we shall find Newburyport paying at the rate of 18 1-2 cents, Danvers 19, Beverly 22, Marblehead 28, Gloucester 48, and Lynn 72 cents. Proceeding further, we shall perceive the proportion of New Bedford to be 36 cents, Charlestown 51 cents, and Lowell 58 cents. The average of all the towns in the county of Essex is 22 cents, and in the whole State, 18 cents.

As between Boston and Salem, the difference, as shown by this mode of estimate, is not considerable, Boston having paid \$107,503 on the immense valuation of \$80,000,000, which is at the rate of nearly 13 1-2 cents. In respect to the ratio of taxation generally, we might expect to find a marked disproportion between these two cities, by far the wealthiest places in the State, according to population, and the towns at large; but in another point of view, as to the amount paid for public schools, in reference to the number of scholars, a difference is to be noticed, Boston paying, on an average, \$11, and Salem \$7 per scholar, per annum. This difference is explained by the more liberal compensation of teachers in Boston, and by the appointment of a larger proportion of teachers and assistants, than has been here allowed.

"In Boston, the number of children in the public schools is 9683, or 12 per cent. of the whole population. It has been estimated, though not ascertained, (as in this particular the returns are deficient,) that not more than 4000,—5 per cent,—are educated in private schools. In Salem, 1462 children, less than ten per cent. of the population, are returned, as in the public schools, and 1469 as in the private schools, that is to say, an equal proportion. In the county of Essex, the proportions are 16 per cent. in public, and 6 per cent. in private schools; and, in the whole State, 20 per cent. in public, and scarcely 4 per cent. in private schools.

"These results entirely negative the supposition that we have as yet provided for what is elsewhere the usual proportion of children in public schools. Nowhere else, in fact, is it so small as here; and nowhere else, on the other hand, is so large a proportion of children educated in private schools, and at so great expense. Taking our public and private schools, together, we apply nearly 40 cents per 100 dollars, to the purposes of edu-



cation ; but this is actually divided in the ratio of 12 cents for public, and 28 cents for private schools, the whole number of scholars being equally divided between both. Our distinction, therefore, consists in having long pursued the policy of rearing, multiplying, and sub-dividing the private schools, to an unparalleled extent, as shown by the returns ; while, at the same time, we have been struggling, against a divided public sentiment, to advance the public schools to the same condition which they have easily attained in other places, where private schools have enjoyed less favor, and where, probably, a doubt is scarcely ever expressed of the importance of raising the standard, and extending the benefits of Public Instruction. We are still in the midst of such a struggle ; and, from the necessity of circumstances, it must depend somewhat upon the measures of the present year, how and when it shall be terminated. These measures may be sufficiently decisive of our future policy, if we should only provide for the gradual accomplishment of the object to which they will be directed."

*To the Editor of the Common School Journal.*

DEAR SIR,—The following article was published in a Boston paper, two or three years since. Its object was to draw attention to prevailing inaccuracies of speech, which ought certainly to be corrected. The errors still exist. Some of them are fastened upon the tongues even of the liberally educated, by the example of those who first taught language to their childhood, and by all-surrounding custom. A republication, in your periodical, may not be without use. For this purpose, the writer presents it to your consideration. If it contain "wretched puns," and other foolish matter, he hopes they will be excused for the sake of the good intended.

Yours, &c.

W. B.

#### A SUPPLICATION TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

About SIXTY THOUSAND SLAVES, owned by the PEOPLE of the UNITED STATES, make the following *supplication* to their masters, not for *emancipation*, but for the *amelioration* of the condition of certain individuals of their race.

MOST SOVEREIGN, RIGHTFUL, AND EXCELLENT MASTERS,—We are the ENGLISH LANGUAGE,—your lawful and perpetual bond-servants, whose names and origin, characters and duties, are so faithfully exhibited, in Noah Webster's great dictionary. By far the largest part of us have received nothing but the kindest usage from our owners, from time immemorial. Some thousands of us, indeed, were it possible, might die of having nothing to do but sleep, shut up in the dormitory of the dictionary, or in the composition of some most learned, or most silly book, which the mass of the people never open. But of this, we do not complain. Nor do we account it much of an evil, that certain Yankees make us weary, with the monstrously long drawl with which they articulate us into use. Nor do we cry out against the painful clipping, cutting-up, and shattering-to-pieces, given us by the African race ;—for we serve them as faithfully as we do their white fellow-mortals,—holding that, as it regards all the relations of human beings to us, all men "are born free and equal."

But now we humbly pray that you will hear what we do complain of. We complain, that certain of our brethren are exceedingly abused, and made wretched, by some thousands, and perhaps millions, of our owners. Their piteous groans have shocked our ears,—their unretrieved sufferings have pained our sympathizing hearts, for many years. We can endure no longer ;—we *must* speak. Your ancient servants come, then, supplicating you to take measures for the relief of the sufferings of the individuals of our number, whose names and particular subjects of complaint shall now be enumerated,—proceeding in alphabetical order.

ARITHMETIC,—that accurate calculator, indispensable to this mighty and money-making nation, grievously complains that he is obliged to work for thousands without the use of A-head, and deprived of one of his two i's. Here is a picture of his mutilated form,—RETHMETIC !

**ATTACKED**,—an important character, that figures so gloriously in military despatches, and is so necessary in medical reports,—is forced, by many, to the use of *t*, more than his constitution will admit. He cannot perform his necessary business, you know, without the use of *t*, twice during every job,—but to have it forced into him three times, causes a change in his constitution and appearance, which he cannot comfortably bear. See how *Attacked* is altered by more *t* than he wants,—**ATTACKTED**.

There is another poor fellow, who has a similar affliction,—**ACROSS**. He is forced to the use of *t*, when his constitution cannot bear it at all. See what a spectacle a little *t* makes of him,—**ACROSST**.

That most excellent friend and profitable servant of the Working-men's party,—**EARN**, complains that those whom he serves the best, deprive him of what little *e*'s his laborious condition demands. See what *Earn* is brought to by such hard treatment,—**AIRN**.

That necessary attendant on every messenger,—**ERRAND**, is in the same state of suffering, from the same cause. *Errand* is made **ARRANT**, which is "notorious, infamous, and ill," (and of course "not to be endured,") as you will perceive by looking in the dictionary.

**ANDIRON**—averts that he is willing to bear any burden that will not break his back, and stand any fire that will not melt him down, or burn the house up,—but he cannot stand it with any comfort or patience, to be breathed upon by that sneaking whisperer, *H*,—in this manner,—**HANDIRON**.

**AFTER**—is willing to linger behind every body else in his business ;—but it is a miserable fate to be deprived of so large a portion of his small energy in this way,—**ARTER**.

"Go *arter* the cows, Tom,"—says Ma'am Milkmoolly. "I move that we adjourn to *arternoon*,"—says Squire Goodman, in the Legislature.

Hear, also, how that entirely different character, and bold goer-ahead, growls as he passes on,—**BEFORE**. 'I will go forward and do my duty as long as any part of me is left sound ; but my well-being is dreadfully affected by a great many people whom I serve,—as you cannot but perceive,'—**AFORE**.

**BELLOWS**,—that excellent household servant,—says he has often had his nose stopped up by ashes, and has wheezed with the asthma for months, but all these afflictions are nothing to usage like this,—**BELLUSES**.

**BACHELOR**—is exceedingly sensitive about what is said of him in the presence of the ladies. He is shockingly mortified at being called **BATCH-ELDER**. To be sure, he is a *batch-elder* than he ought to be, regarding the comfort of maidens and the good of his country ; but he is an odd fellow, and wants his own way. He is almost tempted to destroy himself by taking that deadly poison to his nature,—*a wife*,—in order to be relieved from his mortification.

**BOIL**—is at the hot duty of keeping the pot going, and sometimes it is hard work,—however, he complains not of this ;—but poor *Boil* has had the jaundice, and all other liver complaints, for years, and is *blubbery* like a baby—all in consequence of this, viz : about nine tenths of the cooks in America, and two thirds of the eaters, call him **BILE**.

**CELLAR**—is the lowest character in the house, and takes more wine and cider than any other,—and is the *biggest sauce-box* in the world. Yet, with all the propriety of the parlor, and a sobriety, as if not a drop of intoxicating liquor was in him, and with a civility, remarkable in one usually so *sauce-y*,—he now implores you to remember that he is a *Cellar*, and not a **SULLER**.

**CHIMNEY**.—Here is a character who ten thousand times would have taken fire at an affront, were it not for the danger of burning up the houses and goods of his abusers,—faithful servant and tender-hearted creature that he is ! He is content to do the hottest, hardest, and dirtiest work in the world. You may put as much green wood upon his back as you please, and make him breathe nothing but smoke, and swallow nothing but soot,



and stand over steam, till pots and kettles boil no more,—all these are ease, pleasantness, and peace to abuse like this,—CHIMBLY.

DICTIONARY—rages with all the rough epithets in gentlemanly or vulgar use ; and then he melts into the most tender and heart-moving words of entreaty, and, in fact, tries all the various powers of the English language, (for, wonderful scholar ! he has it all at his tongue's end.) Still further, mighty lexicographic champions, such as Dr. Webster, Sheridan, Walker, Perry, Jones, Fulton and Knight, and Jameson, besides numerous other inferior defenders,—even hosts of spelling-book makers, have all exerted their utmost in vain, to save him from the ignominy of being—DICKSONARY. *Dictionary* is one of the proudest characters in our mighty nation, in respect to his birth and ancestry ; but, used as he is, nobody would dream what his father's name is. Be it known, then, that DICTIONARY is the son of DICTION, who is the lineal descendant of that most renowned, and most eloquent Roman orator, DICO.

END—is uttering the most dolorous groans. There are certain individuals who are always killing him without putting him to an *End*. See what a torture he is put to—EEND—EEND.

FURTHER,—that friend of the progress and improvements of this ahead-going age, stops by the way to ask relief. He is ready to further all the innumerable plans for the benefit of man, except when he is *brought back* in this way—FURDER. Then he is so completely nullified, that he can further the march of mind and matter no more.

GENERAL,—that renowned and glorifying character, whose fame has resounded through the world, is dishonored and made gloryless by many a brave man as well as chicken-heart. He has now intrenched himself in this position, viz : that he will no longer magnify many little militia-folks into mightiness, unless they forbear to call him—GINERAL. It is not only a degradation, but it is an offence to his associations. *Gin—Gin-er-al ;—Wine-er-al*, and much more, *Water-al*, would be more glory-giving in these un-treating, or, rather, re-treating times of temperance.

GAVE,—that generous benefactor,—that magnanimous philanthropist, is almost provoked. He declares that he has a good mind, for once, to demand back his donations from the temper-trying miscallers. I gave a thousand dollars, this very day, towards the completion of Bunker-Hill Monument. But don't say of me—he GIN. I never *gin* a cent in my life.

GET,—that enterprising and active character, who, generally, in this country, helps GIVE and GAVE to the whole wherewithal of their beneficence, and gains, for old KEEP, all his hoarded treasures, and is a stanch friend of all the temperate and industrious of the Working-men's party,—*Get* stops to complain, that some of those he serves the best, call him—GIT. And he is very reluctant to get along about his business, till some measures are taken to prevent the abuse. *Get* is now waiting, ye workies of all professions ; what say ? Will you still, with a merciless *i*, make him *Git* ?

GUM—is always on the *jaw*, that he is so often called GOOMB, in spite of his teeth.

GOWN,—that very ladylike personage, is sighing away at the deplorable *de*-formity that *de*-spoils her beauty in the extreme, as is *de*-veloped in the following *de*-tail, GOWN-D. Oh ! ye lords of language ! if ye have any gallantry, come to the deliverance of the amiable *gown*, that she may shake off this D-pendant.

HANDKERCHIEF,—your personal attendant, is also distressed in the *extreme*. She is kept by many from her *chief*-end in the following cruel manner—*Handker*-CHER.

JANUARY,—that old Roman, is storming away in the most bitter wrath ; shaking about his snowy locks, and tearing away at his icy beard, like a madman. “Blast 'em,” roars his Majesty of Midwinter, “don't they know any better than to call me JINUARY ?” They say, “it is a terrible cold Jiniuary,”—then, “it is the Jiniuary thaw.” Oh ! ye powers of the air ! help me

to freeze and to melt them by turns, every day, for a month, until they shall feel the difference between the vowel *a*, and the vowel *i*. My name is JANUARY.

KETTLE,—that faithful kitchen-servant, is boiling with rage. He is willing to be hung in trammels, and be obliged to get his living by hook and by crook, and be hauled over the coals every day, and take even pot-luck for his fare,—and, indeed to be called black by the pot ;—all this he does not care a snap for—but to be called *Kittle*—KITTLE ! “ Were it not for the stiffness of my limbs, I would soon take leg-bail,” says the fiery hot *Kettle*.

LITTLE—allows that he is a very inferior character, but avers that he is not *least* in the great nation of words. He cannot be *more*, and he will not be *less*. Prompted by a considerable self-respect, he informs us that he is degraded to an unwarrantable diminutiveness by being called—LEETLE. “ A *leetle* too much,” says one. “ A *leetle* too far,” says another. “ A mighty *leetle* thing,” cries a third. Please to call respectable adjectives by their right names, is the polite request of your humble servant—LITTLE.

LIE,—that verb of so quiet a disposition by nature, is roused to complain that his repose is exceedingly disturbed in the following manner. Almost the whole American nation, learned as well as unlearned, have the inveterate habit of saying—LAY, when they mean, and might say—LIE. “ Lay down, and lay abed, and let it lay,” is truly a national sin against the laws of grammar. LIE modestly inquires, whether even the college-learned characters would not be benefited by a few days’ attendance in a good Common School. Lie is rather inclined to indolence, and has a very strong propensity to sleep ;—but he would not be kept in perpetual dormancy for the lack of use. Please to employ me on all proper occasions, gentlemen, and ladies ;—here I LIE.

LIBERTY—is an all-glorious word—the pride and boast of our country. He has been the orator’s Bucephalus,—his very war-horse, with neck “ clothed with thunder.” Oh ! how the noble creature is degraded ! He is made by many a boasting republican, in this land of the free, to pace in this pitiful manner—*Libety*—LIBETY !! Ye sons and daughters of the Revolutionists, if you really aim at your country’s glory, and the world’s best good,—give the *r* the heavy tramp of a battle-host. Not *Libety*—but LIBERTY.

MRS.,—that respectable abbreviation, is exceedingly grieved at the indignity she suffers. The good ladies, whom she represents, are let down from the matronly dignity, to which she would hold them, to the un-married degradation of *Miss* ;—and this in the United States, where matrimony is so universally honored and sought after. She desires it to be universally published,—that *Miss* belongs only to ladies who have never been blessed with husbands ;—and that Mrs. is the legitimate, and never-to-be-omitted title of those who have been raised to superior dignity by *Hy-men*—(high-men.) N. B. *Mistress*, for which Mrs. stands in writing, is generally contracted in speaking to, or of, ladies, by leaving out the letters T and R, in this manner,—*Miss’ess*. Oh ! ye “ bone and muscle of the country !”—how can ye refuse to comply with so gentle and lady-like a request ? We pray you that from the moment the sacred knot is tied, “ until death shall part,” you will say—*Miss’es*. (Oh ! how honored your own name to have such a title prefixed !) “ *Miss’es* So-or-so, in what manner can I best contribute to your real and permanent happiness ?” That’s a good husband ! !

OIL,—you all know, has a disposition, smooth to a proverb ;—but he is, to say the least, in great danger of losing his fine, easy temper, by being treated in the altogether improper manner that you here behold—*Ile* ! ILE ! Poor Oil has been for centuries crying out O ! O ! O !! as loudly and roughly as his melodious but sonorous voice will permit ; but they will not hear—they still call him—*Ile*.

POTATOES,—(those most indispensable servants to all dinner-eating Americans, and the benevolent furnishers of “ daily bread,” and indeed the

whole living to Pat-land's poor,)—**POTATOES**—are weeping with all their eyes, at the agony to which they are put by thousands. They are most unfeelingly mangled, top and toe, in this manner,—**TATERS**. Notwithstanding their *extremities*, in the most *mealy*-mouthed manner they exclaim,—**Po ! Po ! gentlemen and ladies !** pray spare us a head, and you may bruise our *toes* in welcome. Still, you must confess that **POTATERS** is not so sound and *whole-some* as **POTATOES**.

**POINT**—allows that in some respects he is of very minute importance ; but asserts that in others he is of the greatest consequence, as in an argument, for instance. He is, in zeal, the *sharpest* of all those who have entered into the present subject of Amelioration. **Point** is determined to prick forward in the cause, till he shall be no longer blunted and turned away from his aim, and robbed of his very nature, in the *measure* you here perceive—**PINT**. Do not disappoint your injured servant, indulgent masters.

**PHILADELPHIA**—takes off his broad-brim, and, in the softest tones of brotherly love, implores the people of the United States to cease calling him by that harsh, horrid and un-brotherly name,—**FELLY-DELPHY**. It deprives him of his significance, and ancient and honorable lineage, as every Greek scholar well knows. “Oh !” cries the city of “Brotherly Love,” in plaintive, but kindly accents,—“do understand the meaning—behold the amiableness—hearken to the melody, and respect the *sincerity* of **PHILADELPHIA**.”

**POETRY**.—What a halo of glory around this daughter of Genius, and descendant of Heaven ! Behold how she is rent asunder by many a pitiful proser, and made to come *short* of due honor. **POTRY**—Apollo and the Muses know nothing about *Potry* !

**QUENCH**,—that renowned extinguisher, whom all the world can't hold a candle to, is himself very much *put out*, now and then, from this cause,—some people permit that crooked and hissing serpent *S* to get before him and coil round him, while he is in the hurry of duty, as you here see—**SQUENCH** ; and sometimes they give him a horrid black *I*, thus—**SQUINCH**.

**RATHER**—is universally known to be very nice in his preferences, and to be almost continually occupied in expressing them. Be it as universally known, then, that he is disgusted beyond all bearing at being called—**RUTHER**. Oh, how, from time immemorial, has this choice character suffered from the interference of *U*, ye masters !

**SAUCE**—has a good many elements in him, and, above all, a proper share of self-respect. He thinks he has too much spice and spirit to be considered such a flat as this indicates,—**SASS**.

**SAUCER**—complains that he is served the same *sass*. Between them both, unless there is something done, there may be an overflow of *sauciness* to their masters.

**SCARCE**—is not a very frequent complainant of any thing,—but he is now constrained to come forward and pour out more plentifully than common. He complains that certain *Nippies*, both male and female, and hosts of honest imitators, call him **SCURCE**, thinking it the very tip of gentility. He will detain you no longer, gentlemen and ladies, for he prefers to be always—**SCARCE**.

**SUCH**—does not complain of mistaken politeness, but of low and vulgar treatment like this—**SICH**.

**SINCE**—has been crying out against the times, from the period of his birth into English. It is abominable that a character of such vast comprehension, should be so belittled. He embraces all antiquity—goes back beyond Adam,—yea, as far back into the unbeginningness as you could think in a million of years, and unimaginably further. And, Oh ! his hoary head is bowed down with sorrow at being called by two-thirds of the American people, **SENCE**. It is hoped that all the Future and all the Past will be—**SINCE**.

**SPECTACLES**,—those twin literati, who are ever poring over the pages of learning, raise eyes of supplication. They say that they cannot *look* with



due respect upon certain elderly people, who *pronounce* them more unlettered than they really are, as you may perceive without looking with their interested eyes—*SPETACLES*. Venerable friends, pray *c us, c us*,—and give us our due in the matter of letters, and cry—*SPECTACLES*.

*SIT*—has been provoked to stand up in his own behalf, although he is of sedentary habits, and is sometimes inclined to be idle. He declares he has too much pride and spirit to let that more active personage—*SET*—do all his work for him. “*Set still*,” says the pedagogue to his pupils—and parents to their children. “*Set down, sir*,”—say a thousand gentlemen, and some famously learned ones, to their visitors. “The coat *sits* well,” affirms the tailor. Now all this does not *sit* well on your complainant, and he *sets* up his Ebenezer, that he should like a little more to do,—especially in the employ of college-learned men, and also of the teachers of American youth. These distinguished characters ought to *sit* down, and calculate the immense effect of their example in matters of speech.

*SAT*—makes grievous complaint that he is called *Sot*. He begs all the world to know that he hath not redness of eyes, nor rumminess nor brandiness of breath, nor flamingness of nose, that he should be degraded by the drunkard’s lowest and last name—*Sot*. The court *sat*,—not *sot*,—the company *sat* down to dinner—not *sot* down ; but “*verbum SAT*,” if English may be allowed to speak in Latin.

*SHUT*.—This is a person of some importance ;—and, although your slave, is a most exclusive character, as is said of the ultra-fashionables. He is, indeed, the most decisive and unyielding exclusive in the world. He keeps the outs, out, and the ins, in, both in fashionable and political life. He is of most ancient, as well of most exquisite pretensions,—for he kept the door of Noah’s ark tight against the flood. Now this stiff old aristocrat is made to appear exceedingly flat, silly, and undignified, by being called, by sundry persons,—*SHET*. “*Shet the door*,” says old Grandsire Grumble, of a cold, windy day. “*Shet your books*,” says the schoolmaster, when he is about to hear the urchins spell. “*Shet up, you saucy blockhead*,” cries he, to young Insolence. This is too bad ! It is abominable ! a schoolmaster, the appointed keeper of orthographical and orthoepical honor,—letting fall the well-bred and lofty-minded—*SHUT*—from his guardian lips, in the shape of *Shet*. Oh ! the plebian ! Faithless and unfit pedagogue ! ! He ought to be banished to *Shet-land*, where by day he should battle with Boreas, and teach A. B. C. to the posterity of Triptolemus Yellowley’s ass ;—and where by night his bedchamber should be the un-*shut* North,—his bed the summit of a snow-drift,—his sheets nothing but arctic mists,—and his pillow the fragment of an iceberg ! ! Away with the traitor to *Shet-land* ! O most merciful American masters and mistresses ! *Shut* has no relief or safety from the miserableness of *Shet*, but in *U*.

*TOLD*—is a round, sounding preterite, that is real music in a singing-school,—it will bear such a round-mouthed thunder of voice. He feels the dignity of his vocation, and asks not to be kept out of use by such bad grammar as this—*TELLED*. “He *telled* me so-and-so.” Pshaw ! that renowned talker and servant of old Peter Parley, *TELL*, declares that no one has ever derived existence from him by the name of—*TELLED*. Pray, masters and mistresses, don’t now forget what you have been—*TOLD*.

Yes,—that good-natured personage, affirms that were he not of so complying a disposition, he would henceforth be *no* to every body who should call him—*Yis*. To this pleasant hint, ye kindly ones, you cannot but say, *Yes—Yes ! !*

*Finally, Harken !* There is a voice from the past. It is the complaint of departing *YESTERDAY*. He cries aloud—Give ear, O, To-day, and hear, hear, O, To-morrow ! Never, never more, call me *Yisterday* !

We have thus presented you, Sovereign Owners, with the complaints and groans of a considerable number of our race. There are, doubtless, many others, who are also in a state of suffering, but who have uncommon

fortitude, or too much modesty, to come forward publicly, and make known their trials to our whole assembled community. Should the abuse of any such happen to be known to you at any time, we pray that the same consideration may be given to them as to the rest. Your supplicants fear that they have wearied your patience. Nevertheless, we must venture a little further in our poor address. Please, then, to lend us your indulgence, a few moments longer.

There is one family in the country, of whom it is difficult for your supplicants to speak with any degree of calmness, or with that charity proper to be exercised towards frail human nature. We mean the DOWNING family. There is no abuse of language too gross for them. They torture words into such unnatural shapes that the stretchings and disjointings of a Catholic Inquisition would be a pleasure in comparison. They make short, long, and long, short, without mercy, Oh! what agony in their spelling! An ignorant child might mangle us in orthography, with innocence, as he might stick pins through flies, or pull their wings off, not dreaming of the torture he inflicts; but when a man,—a statesman,—a military man, and a *Great* man, like the indomitable, the super-heroic and immortally renowned JACK DOWNING, is thus barbarous and butcherly on the servants of his lips and pen, it is above

“All Greek, above all Roman *fame*,”

in the treatment of slaves. But we will not dwell on the misdoings of the Major, in a vain spirit of vindictiveness. He is dead and gone, according to the record of the Portland Courier, “away down in Maine.” But, alas! his works remain, disseminating their Vandal influence. Therefore, we earnestly entreat the free, and ought-to-be-enlightened people of the United States, to arise, all as one, in this great cause of *Letters*, and hunt up and gather together all the writings of said JACK DOWNING, and make ashes of them, to be trodden under foot, so as never more to come near any body’s head in the shape and quality of *LETTERS*. We entreat, also, that the similar writings of his relations,—“Sargent Joel,” and the rest,—and all other *Il-literati* of like stamp, may be put, ashes to ashes, with the Major’s. Still further, in behalf of sound learning and ourselves, we beg that all remaining members of the *Downing* family, may be sought out by the protecting hand of Public Justice, and hurled into that original nothingness, from which, without father or mother, they rose. Or, if the following process shall be deemed of greater utility, we desire that it may be adopted instead, viz:—Let all parents and school-teachers take the afore-mentioned *Il-literature*, and point out to their children and pupils all the abuses of good grammar and correct spelling therein to be found. Let these abuses be made a sign and a warning to them, never to be guilty of the same. Let this be done, and we will cease from our maledictions on the Downingville heroes and heroines. Yea, we prefer that the last suggestion should be carried into effect. Let the Major, the Sargent, Ezekiel Bigelow, and all the rest of them, live in their works. Who knows but that they are even more beneficent and wise than the world and ourselves have ever dreamed. On reflection, we are more and more inclined to the opinion, that we have been designedly abused in said writings, on purpose to excite public attention and commiseration towards similar abuses experienced by us, every day, from thousands and indeed millions of others in this country. If this afterthought be true, we most cordially take back whatever of severity we may have indulged towards these deep-planning benefactors. We cannot but entertain agreeable anticipations. From the unfound boundary of remotest Maine; yea, from the furthestmost point of “Away down East,” to the Southwesternmost corner of that *Hurrah-Land*, called Texas,—we extend our visions of amelioration. We behold pedagogues and parents making use of the *Downing* writings as a text-book, whereby to illustrate the bad usage of their faithful servants, ourselves. Or at least we behold them

watching the bad habits of their own lips, and most sedulously correcting the bad habits of the young as often as they may appear. Now, Sovereign Masters and Mistresses, and Rightful Owners, shall these visions of hope be realized? Shall the condition of our suffering brethren be ameliorated? Shall the era of good grammar, correct spelling, and proper pronunciation, be hastened forward by some benevolent exertions? Shall the present abuses be transmitted to the future or not? Shall the Golden Age of Speech speedily come, and last evermore?

That such improvement in their condition may be vouchsafed, is the humble prayer of your supplicants;—all whose names, being too numerous to be here subscribed, may be found recorded in Webster's great dictionary.

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[For the Common School Journal.]

### THE ADVANTAGES OF COMMON SCHOOLS, AND THE DANGERS TO WHICH THEY ARE EXPOSED.

*Addressed to the Professional Men of Massachusetts.*

NO. 1.

GENTLEMEN,—I shall make no apology for addressing you on the important subject of Common School Education. Being called by your professions, to guard the temple of justice, to heal the maladies of our bodies, and to watch for souls as those who must give an account, you must feel a deep interest in whatever relates to the physical and moral well-being of society. As statesmen, as philanthropists, and as Christians, the cause of Education must lie near your hearts. Most of you have enjoyed the blessings of a liberal education. But you cannot, I am persuaded, look with indifference upon the great mass of the community, who have not enjoyed the privilege which has fallen to your lot. You know the advantages of a collegiate education, but you know that the college lies beyond the reach of the great mass of the people. The recondite depths of science have occupied, and for ever must, occupy the leisure of the learned few.

The great majority of our population do and for ever will depend upon our town schools for the only education they obtain. It has been estimated that nineteen twentieths of the entire population of the United States have no other means of education, than those furnished by institutions similar to our town schools. And in our own favored Commonwealth, it has been estimated that five sixths of our children attend town schools only. When I plead for Common Schools, I plead for the great mass of the people—for five sixths of the rising generation. Nay, I plead for the whole community. There is not an individual in the land, who is not benefited by these little seminaries, established in our midst. A vast majority of our people depend entirely upon our free schools, and those who aim at something higher, generally commence their literary course in the district seminary. I presume that at least nine tenths of you received the first rudiments of your education in the Common School.

It is hardly possible to over-estimate the value of Education. In every point of view, it is important that knowledge should be diffused throughout the whole community. In nothing does the wisdom of our fathers appear more conspicuous, than in the provision they made for the instruction of the rising generation. We praise them for their wisdom in the cabinet, and for their bravery in the field, and for the liberal form of government they have left us,—but we seem to forget that wise and pious forecast which led them to provide for a general diffusion of knowledge, without which bravery would prove a curse, and our government become an engine of despotism. Much as we owe them for our civil institutions, we owe them incomparably more for the institutions of science and literature which they established. Their sagacity enabled them to foresee that a general diffusion of



intelligence was indispensable to self-government ; and consequently, as early as 1642, we find them making legal provision for the education of all the children in the province. But their first statutes required family, rather than public, instruction, and its burden fell upon those who had children to educate.

Five years subsequently, however, this statute was superseded by another, which required every town of fifty families to provide a teacher to instruct all the children in the town in reading and writing ; and every town of a hundred families, to set up a grammar school, with a teacher competent to fit young men for the university—the expense of these schools to be borne by the town, or by the parents, as the town should determine. Additional laws were passed from time to time, till it was provided, in 1692, that the charge of supporting these schools should be paid exclusively by the towns ; —and heavy penalties were annexed, to secure the observance of these provisions.

Thus was the foundation of our Common Schools laid early by our pious ancestors. They had previously founded a university, of which they and New England have had reason to be proud. But as highly as they esteemed that institution, and as fondly as they cherished it, they were aware that its honors would be shared by the few, and that the great mass of the people could never participate directly in its benefits. This conviction led to the adoption of our free school system,—to the setting up, in every town, of those little seminaries upon which the great mass of the people must for ever depend. They had in the parent country, witnessed the evil effects of aristocracy, and they wished to guard against it in this country. They had seen the poor degraded, and deprived of the means of instruction, and they wished to prevent the evil in these free colonies. They had seen rich and overgrown universities dispensing their blessings upon the few, while the many were left in dark ignorance, and deprived of the means of instruction, and they at once resolved that such a state of inequality should not exist in New England.

This led to the establishment of our free school system. And they looked to these little institutions as the garden where the seeds of all science and literature were to be sown. Here, the great bulk of the people were to receive their only education ; and here, too, those who were destined to the higher walks of literature, were to be fitted for the university. They regarded the free school system, as the very foundation of our civil institutions ; they looked to it for the diffusion of moral principle—for the peace and good order of society—for the permanency of our civil institutions, and for the prosperity of the church of God.

If you are attached to our free institutions—if you prefer liberty to slavery, you will exert yourselves to sustain our free school system. Every measure which is adopted, tending to degrade the town schools, is one step taken to sap the foundation of the temple of freedom. If you, by neglect or indifference, or by taking your children from the town schools, contribute to bring them into disrepute, you are warring against that equality for which our patriot fathers contended and are aiding the cause of despotism.—I see in your ranks some of the purest patriots in the country, some of the greatest philanthropists of which the Commonwealth can boast. You would do nothing to undermine the fair fabric of our liberties ; on the contrary, you would exert yourselves to the utmost to carry forward and perfect our free institutions.—But you will permit me to inquire whether you have not withheld your countenance from our town schools, and thereby counteracted the great object which our fathers had in view ? Has not the course which some of you have pursued in relation to the education of your own children tended to reduce the reputation of our excellent free school system ? Have you not, in many instances, taken your sons and your daughters from the district school, and thereby practically said that these schools were unworthy